

CLAIMS

1. A server apparatus for providing a search service to clients over a network to allow searching for information stored in a plurality of addressable logical locations over the network, the server apparatus comprising:

5 a database of index information for information stored at a plurality of the logical locations, the index information including the addresses of the logical locations and descriptive information for information stored at each logical location, the descriptive information matching a common profile of interest to a group of users;

10 a processor; and

a storage device coupled to the processor and having stored therein programming instructions for instructing the processor to perform data processing comprising:

15 receiving index information comprising an address and corresponding descriptive information derived by a client apparatus from the information stored at the address; and

updating the database using the received index information.

2. A server apparatus according to claim 1, wherein updating the database comprises determining relevance of the received index information by comparing the descriptive information in received index information to the profile, and updating the database using the descriptive information and the address for any index information determined to be relevant.

25 3. A server apparatus according to claim 1, wherein at least some of the stored information at the logical locations has links to stored information at other addresses, and wherein the processing further comprises:

accessing and retrieving information at addresses in the received index information;

when the retrieved information has links, accessing and retrieving information stored at the other addresses;

deriving descriptive information using retrieved information;

5 determining relevance of the retrieved information by comparing the descriptive information to the profile; and

updating the database using the address and descriptive information of any retrieved information determined relevant.

10 4. A server apparatus according to claim 1, the processing further comprising:

periodically checking the database to identify any index information that has not been updated recently;

accessing and retrieving information stored at any addresses in identified index information;

15 deriving descriptive information using retrieved information;

determining relevance of the retrieved information by comparing the descriptive information to the profile; and

updating the database using the address and descriptive information of any retrieved information determined relevant.

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5. A server apparatus according to claim 2, wherein updating the database comprises determining the relevance of the retrieved information by matching keywords of the profile to key words of the descriptive information.

25 6. A server apparatus according to claim 5, wherein matching keywords of the profile to key words of the descriptive information is performed by lexical matching of synonyms.

7. A server apparatus according to claim 2, wherein updating the database comprises determining the relevance of the retrieved information by a

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natural language matching of text of the profile with text of the descriptive information.

8. A method of operating a server providing a search service to clients over a network to allow searching for information stored in a plurality of addressable logical locations over the network, the method comprising:

receiving from a client index information comprising an address for stored information retrieved by a client and descriptive information derived from the stored information; and

updating a database of index information for information stored at a plurality of addressable logical locations using the received index information, wherein the index information in the database includes addresses of the logical locations and descriptive information for information stored at each logical location, the descriptive information matching a common profile of interest to a group of users.

9. A method according to claim 8 including determining the relevance of the received index information by comparing the descriptive information therein to the profile, wherein the database is updated using only index information determined to be relevant.

10. A method according to claim 8 wherein at least some of the stored information at the logical locations has links to stored information at other addresses, the method further including:

accessing and retrieving information at addresses in the received index information;

when the retrieved information has links, accessing and retrieving information at the other addresses;

deriving descriptive information using retrieved information;

determining relevance of the retrieved information by comparing the descriptive information to the profile; and

updating the database using only address and descriptive information of any retrieved information determined relevant.

11. A method according to claim 8 further comprising:

5 periodically checking the database to identify any index information that has not been updated recently;

accessing and retrieving information stored at any of the addresses in identified index information;

deriving descriptive information using retrieved information;

10 determining relevance of the retrieved information by comparing the descriptive information to the profile; and

updating the database using the address and descriptive information of any retrieved information determined relevant.

15 12. A method according to Claim 9 wherein updating the database comprises determining the relevance of the retrieved information by matching keywords of the profile to key words of the descriptive information.

20 13. A method according to claim 9 wherein matching keywords of the profile to key words of the descriptive information is performed by lexical matching of synonyms.

25 14. A method according to claim 8 wherein updating the database comprises determining the relevance of the retrieved information by a natural language matching of text of the profile with text of the descriptive information.

30 15. A client apparatus for accessing a server apparatus providing a search service to clients over a network to allow searching for information stored in a plurality of addressable logical locations over the network, the client apparatus comprising:

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a processor; and

a storage device coupled to the processor and having stored therein programming instructions for instructing the processor to perform data processing comprising:

- 5 monitoring accessing and retrieval of stored information;
 deriving descriptive information using retrieved information;
 determining the relevance of the retrieved information by comparing
the descriptive information to a profile; and
 sending relevant descriptive information and a corresponding address
10 to the server apparatus for the updating of a database.

16. A client apparatus according to claim 15 wherein at least some of the stored information at the logical locations has links to stored information at other addresses, and wherein the processing further comprises:

- 15 accessing and retrieving information stored at other linked addresses;
 deriving descriptive information from retrieved information;
 determining relevance of the descriptive information by comparing the
descriptive information to the profile; and
 sending relevant descriptive information and a corresponding address
20 to the server apparatus for updating of the database.

17. A client apparatus according to claim 15, wherein determining relevance comprises matching keywords of the profile to the descriptive information.

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18. A client apparatus according to claim 17, wherein matching keywords is performed by lexical matching of synonyms.

19. A client apparatus according to claim 15, wherein determining relevance comprises natural language matching of text of the profile with text of the descriptive information.

5 20. A method of operating a client for accessing a server providing a search service to clients over a network to allow searching for information stored in a plurality of addressable logical locations over the network, the method comprising:

10 monitoring accessing and retrieval of stored information;
deriving descriptive information using retrieved information;
determining the relevance of the retrieved information by comparing the descriptive information to a profile; and
15 sending relevant descriptive information and corresponding address to the server for the updating of a database.

20 21. A method according to claim 20 wherein at least some of the stored information at the logical locations has links to stored information at other addresses, the method further comprising:

25 accessing and retrieving information stored at other linked addresses;
deriving descriptive information from retrieved information;
determining relevance of the descriptive information by comparing the descriptive information to the profile; and
sending relevant descriptive information and a corresponding address to the server apparatus for updating of the database.

22. A method according to claim 20 wherein determining relevance comprises matching keywords of the profile to keywords of the descriptive information.

23. A method according to claim 22 wherein matching keywords is performed by lexical matching of synonyms.

24. A method according to claim 20 wherein determining relevance
5 comprises natural language matching of text of the profile with text of the descriptive information.

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